

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 122434

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ORIGIN EB-07

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

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E.O11652: N/A

TAGS: EPAP, EAGR, CS

SUBJECT: 1976 MEAT IMPORT PROGRAM

REF: SAN JOSE 02368

1. LETTERS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND DOMESTIC GROUPS, SIGNIFICANT CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST, AND OTHER DOMESTIC CONSIDERATIONS PRECLUDE DECREASE IN SIZE CUSHION.

2. PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT OF ONE PARTICIPANT, WHETHER WRITTEN OR ORAL, WOULD JEOPARDIZE INTEGRITY OF THIS YEAR'S PROGRAM AND MAKE FUTURE AGREEMENTS MORE DIFFICULT TO NEGOTIATE. SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR COSTA RICA WOULD IMMEDIATELY POSE PROBLEM OF U.S. FAVORING COSTA RICA OVER PANAMA, WHICH HAS REQUESTED SIMILAR TREATMENT. OTHERS COULD BE EXPECTED TO FOLLOW WITH REQUESTS OF THEIR OWN.

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PAGE 02 STATE 122434

3. THE ESTIMATE OF 1976 IMPORTS FROM IRELAND WAS SET AT A

LEVEL EQUAL TO SHIPMENTS RECEIVED AS OF THE DATE OF IMPOSITION OF COUNTERVAILING DUTIES, BASED ON MEAT INSPECTION STATISTICS. THEREFORE, THE ESTIMATE FOR IRELAND WILL CERTAINLY BE MET AND MAY BE SLIGHTLY EXCEEDED.

4. AS OF MAY 1 CANADA HAS SHIPPED 26.3 MILLION POUNDS OR APPROXIMATELY 42 PERCENT OF OUR ESTIMATE OF ANTICIPATED IMPORTS FROM CANADA OF 64 MILLION POUNDS. INDICATIONS ARE THAT CANADA WILL MEET AND MAY EXCEED ITS ESTIMATE.

5. IN 1975 COSTA RICAN ALLOCATION UNDER MEAT AGREEMENT WAS 54.2 MILLION POUNDS. SHIPMENTS OF MEAT TO U.S. BY COSTA RICA IN 1975 TOTALED 60.5 MILLION POUNDS. WE QUESTION IF ORAL UNDERSTANDING WITH COSTA RICA WOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY BINDING TO LIMIT EXCESS SHIPMENTS.

6. TREATMENT OF COSTA RICA ON SAME TERMS AS CANADA IS INCONSISTENT WITH UNDERSTANDING WRITTEN INTO AGREEMENT PREAMBLE, WHICH STATES THAT SIMILAR AGREEMENTS ALSO WILL BE CONCLUDED WITH OTHER COUNTRIES THAT PARTICIPATED IN THE 1975 RESTRAINT PROGRAM AND WHICH CONTINUE TO EXPORT SUBSTANTIAL QUANTITIES OF MEAT TO THE U.S. UNQUOTE. IF COSTA RICA WERE PERMITTED TO CHANGE STATUS FROM SIGNATORY TO NON-SIGNATORY, ANY OTHER PROGRAM PARTICIPANT COULD ASK FOR SIMILAR TREATMENT, AND THE SYSTEM COULD COLLAPSE. CANADA'S UNIQUE STATUS AS NON-PARTICIPANT IS BASED ON TRADITIONAL OPEN BORDER IN TWO-WAY MEAT TRADE AND CANADA'S HISTORICAL REFUSAL TO CONCLUDE RESTRAINT AGREEMENT .
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